



Department of Rehabilitation Services

Success Stories

Rotair Industries, Inc., Bridgeport, CT



(From left to right) John Maher and Wayne Wallberg.

connect-ability

Rotair Industries, Inc., Bridgeport, CT, makes helicopter replacement parts that meet the standard of aerospace leaders who set the standard. Not surprisingly, Rotair is fueling a workforce where all abilities can soar.



Wayne Wallberg, IT Supervisor for Rotair, was about to make a change that would impact workflow and, in turn, customers that include Bell Helicopter and Sikorsky Aircraft. The challenge? Implement Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), a business management software, while ensuring a smooth transition across all disciplines and departments.

Holly Heaven, Senior Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor from the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), reached out to Wayne with a job candidate to help make the software transition a success.

Holly suggested John Maher, a prescreened, prequalified job seeker, who lives with Autism. She then set up an informational interview so John and Wayne could meet. John had computer skills – but they needed updating. Still, Wayne was impressed with John's desire to learn and offered him the opportunity to come in and get some experience. No job – just experience.

“Disability or not, everyone has to integrate with the workflow and the workforce.”

Wayne Wallberg, IT Supervisor

So Holly created an On-the-Job Training (OJT) opportunity, funded by BRS. During OJT, Wayne mentored John but, admittedly, “threw him into the fire.” And John delivered while advancing his computer skills through training from Bright Horizons, funded by BRS.

As John can sometimes struggle with interacting with others, Holly gave Wayne some tips to help John feel more comfortable. That was key because Wayne tasked John with spending time with a variety of end users at Rotair. “Programming is most useful when it's designed from the user's perspective. Disability or not, everyone has to integrate with the workflow and the workforce,” says Wayne.

The best part? John is now a Senior Programmer. “I went from a one-room apartment to a three-bedroom apartment. I came in on a trial basis and have been here ever since,” said John. Additionally, Rotair was eligible for the Work Opportunity Tax Credit available to employers. Clearly, John Maher is doing what he loves to do – and getting paid for it. Now that's a program everyone can get behind.

How we help:

- Candidate Prescreening
- Informational Interview
- On-the-Job Training
- Job Placement
- Work Opportunity Tax Credit

